

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger:

As the House and Senate negotiate the final Fiscal Year 2020 funding bill, we urge you to accept the funding level with the increased allocation according to the adopted report language from the House-passed Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Bill, which provides \$85 million in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program.

Since the states and EPA agreed to the Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration goals in 2010, much progress has been made towards improving the health of the watershed. Today, we are at a critical juncture in Chesapeake Bay restoration. Positive signs of recovery have emerged in the Chesapeake Bay itself and in tributaries throughout the entire watershed, proving that the collaborative restoration effort is working. We are more than half-way to achieving the shared goal of clean water by 2025.

But as the 2025 deadline approaches, it is clear that more resources are needed to continue the progress made. New research pertaining to increased nutrient and sediment flows through the Conowingo Dam indicates that we must reduce over 6 million pounds of pollution beyond the original 2010 targets. To address this issue, in December 2017, the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) agreed to work collaboratively on a separate Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

More broadly, although we now know what conservation practices provide the greatest return, we lack funding for implementation at the scale required. Dollars are needed at three levels: 1) the small watershed and innovative practices grant programs; 2) local government technical assistance and implementation; and 3) state-based targeted and cost-effective implementation.

We appreciate the \$5.28 million increase for a total of \$78.28 million for the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program passed in the recent Senate minibus, but we think the resource needs in the

Chesapeake Bay watershed demonstrate a need for an increase to \$85 million. By increasing the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program funding level to \$85 million, it would be possible to achieve significant measurable results in each of these areas, and each federal dollar leverages many more in State, local and private funding.

The Chesapeake Bay is an economic driver for the entire region – including recreation, education, and commercial enterprises. It is critical that the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort meet its 2025 pollution reduction goals. The Chesapeake Bay Program is a national model for clean water partnerships and an important bellwether for the success of other major body of water restoration efforts around the country. We are within sight of delivering clean water. For these reasons, we hope you will support funding the program at \$85 million in the conference report.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



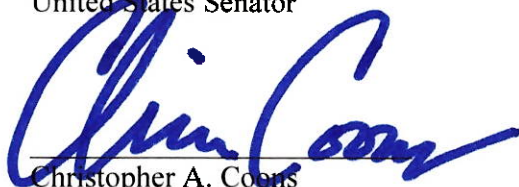
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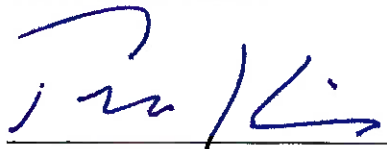
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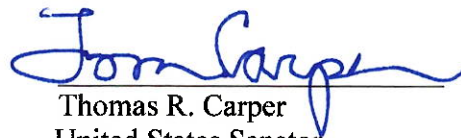
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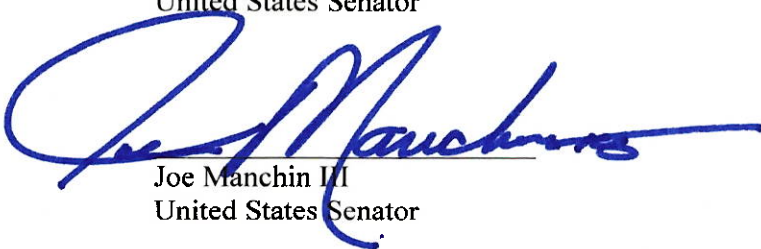
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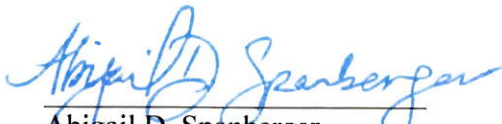
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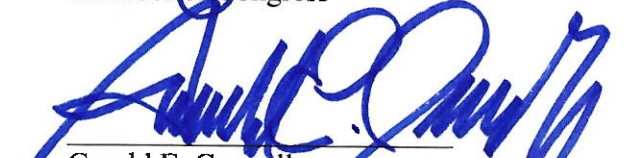

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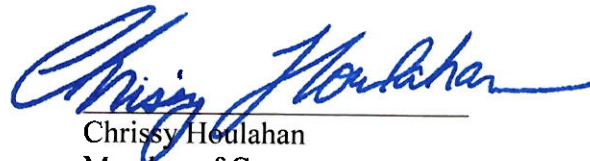

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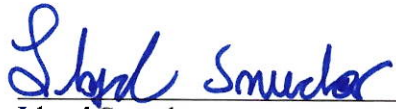

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